

July 9, 2003

Governor Baldacci Announces Aquaculture Task Force

AUGUSTA, MAINE- Governor John Baldacci today announced the formation of the *Task Force on the Planning and Development of Marine Aquaculture in Maine*. Eleven distinguished and highly qualified Maine citizens, appointed by the Governor, have agreed to serve during the summer and fall of 2003 and deliberate upon the many policy questions surrounding marine aquaculture including:

- Reviewing bay management or aquaculture development strategies from other states and countries;
- Reviewing the present economic impacts and short and long term growth potential of marine aquaculture farms in Maine;
- Assessing the impacts aquaculture has on tourism, recreation, and conserved lands;
- Assessing how the external impacts of aquaculture farms can be best mitigated;
- Reviewing all state/federal law related to submerged property & riparian rights; and
- Assessing the role of municipalities in the leasing process.

This Task Force is the result of a Governor's bill passed during the past legislative session, and is designed to ensure that Maine will move toward a consensus on the future of aquaculture among the other sectors of the marine economy. "Marine aquaculture is an important part of the State's marine economy. However, the controversy that has surrounded aquaculture in recent years has impeded Maine's ability to stand back and think comprehensively about aquaculture's place on the coast. This Task Force provides a much-needed opportunity for the kind of focused deliberation that will help us to move forward with marine aquaculture planning," explained Governor Baldacci.

Department of Marine Resources Commissioner George Lapointe agreed, saying "Consistently, all stakeholders in the aquaculture debate have agreed that aquaculture is a legitimate part of the marine economy. What people haven't been able to come to terms with is a rational way of determining how much there should be, and where it should, or should not, take place."

The work of the Task Force will culminate in a final report of recommendations to the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources. The Task Force is also authorized to report out legislation, should it see a need to do so. The Task Force will be aided by an eleven-member Stakeholders Advisory Panel, the members of which will be appointed by the leadership of the Maine House

and Senate. Staffing will be provided by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and the State Planning Office (SPO).

The meetings of the Task Force will take place all along the Maine coast, and members will be spending time on the water, and gathering information directly from stakeholders and experts. All of the Task Force meetings are public, and four of the meetings will include public hearings to solicit information from interested citizens.

The first Task Force meeting will take place August 7-8th, in Eastport. Please visit the DMR's website (www.maine.gov/dmr) for more information when the finalized agenda becomes available.

Task Force Members:

Paul Anderson, Maine Sea Grant
Brian Beal, University of Maine, Machias
Jim Dow, Blue Hill Heritage Trust
Des Fitzgerald, Founder Ducktrap River Fish
Paul Frinsko, Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer & Nelson
Anne Hayden, Resource Services, Inc.
Will Hopkins, Cobscook Bay Resource Center
Donald Perkins, Gulf of Maine Research Institute
Van Perry, Finance Authority of Maine
Josie Quintrell, Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System
Jim Salisbury, Retired CEO Supreme Alaska Seafoods

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